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# "The African American Experience: An Historical Bibliographical Guide" Book Review

M. Elaine Hughes

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*Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence.*—J. Christina Smith, *Anthropology and Sociology Bibliographer*, Boston University

***The African American Experience: An Historical Bibliographical Guide.*** Ed. by Arvarh E. Strickland and Robert E. Weems Jr. Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 2001. 456p. alkaline \$95 (ISBN 0-313-29838-6). www.greenwood.com.

This one-of-a-kind work is composed of seventeen historical/bibliographical chapters. Each opens with an extensive bibliographical essay on some aspect of the African American experience in the United States, followed by a lengthy bibliography of books, articles, videos, and other media. The editors are Arvarh E. Strickland, an educator, former high school teacher, and college/university professor, and Robert E. Weems Jr., a prolific writer of articles on African Americans and business.

The chapters, covering topics such as "African American Migration and Urbanization," "The African American Worker in Slavery and Freedom," and "African American Intellectual and Political Thought," are very well written, with references to the major works, in print or out of print, on each particular topic. Each chapter presents a broad overview of the historical period or the particular subject matter. An index is included with references to books and monographs in italics.

The best way to fit this work into the body of bibliographical literature already published is to view it as the most important guide to the literature of black studies as of this date. The editors state their purpose for publishing this volume is "to help fill the need for a comprehensive bibliographical work to serve as a guide in the use of this growing body of sources." They are referring to the growing body of sources in the field of black studies since the late 1960s, when students protested and demanded black studies departments. I believe this volume serves its purpose. It cannot be totally comprehensive because, of course, on the

same day that the book was published, more articles, books, or videos were issued that could have been included. Nevertheless, it serves its purpose in that it pinpoints major works in the field of black studies up to the year 2001. It also has added value over and above any standard bibliography on the African American experience to date because of the wonderful historical essays that precede the bibliographies. Other major bibliographies in the field include: Richard Newman's *Black Access: A Bibliography of Afro-American Bibliographies* (Greenwood, 1984), Debra Newman Ham's *The African American Mosaic* (Library of Congress, 1993), Dwight L. Smith's *Afro-American History: A Bibliography* (ABC-Clio, 1974), and Elizabeth Miller's *The Negro in America: A Bibliography* (Harvard Univ. Pr., 1970). Recommended for large academic and public libraries.—M. Elaine Hughes, *Reference Desk Coordinator*, Pullen Library, Georgia State University, Atlanta

***Atlas of the Evolving Earth.*** By Richard T. J. Moody, Andrey Yu Zhuravlev, Dougal Dixon, and Ian Jenkins. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001. 3 vols. \$175 (ISBN 02-865387-4). www.mlr.com; www.andromeda.co.uk.

The three-volume *Atlas of the Evolving Earth* is a feast for the eyes and the mind. Full of color illustrations and photographs that ably display complicated concepts, this is an extremely useful reference work. The theme of the book is change over time—evolution, of both the Earth and the life upon it.

The ages of the Earth are divided among the three volumes. Volume 1 covers the origins of the Earth up to the Silurian era, while volume 2 covers the Devonian to the Cretaceous periods. Volume 3 finishes with the Paleogene to the present. Each volume has two parts, each part having a few chapters and a few features. The features are generally two pages long and focus on the evolution of a group of organisms (chordates, amphibia, flowering plants, etc.) or the workings of the earth (e.g., fossil

formation, chemical cycles). The front matter, introduction, and explanation of the geological time scale are repeated in each volume. Each volume ends with the same glossary, index, further reading, and acknowledgments for illustrations.

Although the pages of this reference work may resemble the multi-colored pages of a sixth-grade encyclopedia, the content is aimed at those already familiar with geological and biological concepts. High school and college-level words are used in the glossary's definitions. Because of that, I am puzzled by some of the subject headings assigned to this book: Physical Geography—Maps for Children; Historical Geology—Maps for Children; and Children's Atlases. Three other subject headings are also used: Physical Geography, Historical Geography, and Atlases. I am concerned that the use of the word "children" in the first three subject headings will cause reference librarians to shy away from this set. Although the illustrations can support younger students' reports or projects, the text will be understandable only to high school or older students.

*The Historical Atlas of the Earth* by Osborne and Tarling (Henry Holt, 1996) is similar, using colorful illustrations, maps, and photographs to augment the text. Each topic is covered by two pages of text and illustration. Although this is a wonderful book, it isn't constructed to indicate the changes and interactions that have occurred during the life of the Earth. It is a series of maps, with text that accompanies each map. *Atlas of the Evolving Earth* is more of an encyclopedia—with the chronological story of the evolution of the Earth and life on Earth accompanied by maps and other illustrations.

I recommend *Atlas of the Evolving Earth* for public and academic libraries and junior high and high school libraries. It will become a popular resource.—Robin N. Sinn, *Head Librarian*, Ogg Science Library, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio